

Northern Flank by A. Borealis

How long will Olof Palme last?

New attacks against Palme—and defensive statements by the Swedish premier—signal that he may soon be out.

A political brawl that erupted during the pre-Christmas period indicates that Prime Minister Olof Palme is getting nervous about his re-election chances in Sweden's general parliamentary elections next September. This is not because of any particular aggressivity on the part of Palme's main adversary in the parliament—the weak Moderate Party—but rather because of Palme's well-grounded fears that his widespread unpopularity may be converted into mass support for the Resistance movement that opposes him both inside and outside the Social Democratic Party.

Under a front-page banner headline, "The Resistance inside the Social Democracy Demands: Palme, Resign!" the Swedish newspaper *Helgbladet* wrote on Dec. 25: "Now, there is also ferment inside the socialist movement. Alf Enerström, a physician and the leader of the opposition inside the Social Democracy, has joined
bers (among
man of the Transport Workers' Union Hans Ericson) and demands that Olof Palme resign now and not wait until the election in 1985."

A large picture extending across the entire front page shows Alf Enerström, his wife, Hans Ericson, and Kerstin Tegin-Gaddy, who, it is noted, is not a member of the Social Democratic Party but the chairman of the European Labor Party (ELP). The caption reads that these four people "are not mild in their judgment,

that together, thing they can to force the opposition inside the party into action. . . ." The paper then reports a new poll which "indicate that Olof Palme will not remain prime minister for much longer."

For tactical reasons, Palme has chosen not to openly counterattack the European Labor Party-Resistance movement alliance that is campaigning for Sweden to join Alliance and contribute to the development of President Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative. Palme complains that the Moderate Party must more effectively police all opposition to his regime. If continues, the moderates will be branded unreliable on defense of Sweden's policy of neutrality.

The Moderate Party leadership, of course, has never even contemplated abandoning its obsession with preserving Swedish neutrality. But several chunks of the Moderate constituency are considering abandoning their leadership in favor of the ELP campaign for closer Swedish relations with the West. It demands the Moderate leadership ward off.

In 20 by national Swedish radio, Palme complained of "criticism that is mainly composed of invectives, such as our statements having been authored in Moscow, or that the senior official for security policy from the prime minister's office [Ulf Larsson] is almost a quisling. . . ."

Going out of their way to appease Palme—who is himself going out of his way to appease the Kremlin—the leaders of the Moderate Party leadership are only making things worse. The party's security expert, Carl Bildt, on Dec. 24 published an op-ed in the party newspaper *Svenska Dagbladet* headlined: "The Opinion of the Palme Commission Is calling for support of statements issued by Palme's Independent mission on Disarmament and Security Issues Chicago.

The Moderates' blunder was committed in a situation where Palme's credibility has reached a new low. Unpopular as he is in Sweden, one of Palme's few assets with the Swedish electorate has been his ostensible role as an internationally respected statesman. But despite repeated approaches, Palme has failed to obtain an invitation for an official visit to Washington, D.C.

Palme wants to go to Washington because such a visit is currently regarded as a precondition for going to Moscow. Officially, however, going to Moscow without first going to Washington would be unwise for Palme, given the strained relationship between Stockholm and Moscow after recent Soviet military incursions into Swedish waters and air space. It known that one of Palme's prime concerns is to facilitate the continued transfer of high technology from the United States to Sweden, despite past revelations of Sweden leaking sensitive U.S. technologies to the East.

If ton-Moscow roundtrip is merely designed to assure the Kremlin of Sweden's continued role in leaking American technologies, President Reagan should withhold such an invitation til the ELP and the Swedish Resistance have booted Palme out of office.